

Pesticide residue exceeds legal limit in water spinach sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 29) announced that a water spinach sample was found to contain pesticide residue at a level exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the case.

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS collected the water spinach sample from a stall at the Cheung Sha Wan Wholesale Vegetable Market for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained methamidophos at a level of 0.21 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the maximum residue limit (MRL) of 0.05 ppm.

"Based on the level of pesticide residue detected in the sample, adverse health effects will not be caused under usual consumption," he added.

Generally speaking, to reduce pesticide residues in vegetables, members of the public can rinse vegetables thoroughly under clean running water, and scrub produce with hard surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances including pesticides and contaminants from the surface and the crevices, when appropriate.

Any person who imports, manufactures or sells any food not in compliance with the requirements of the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap 132CM) concerning pesticide residues commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

Since the regulation came into effect on August 1, 2014, the CFS has taken over 147 400 samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for testing for pesticide residues. Together with the unsatisfactory sample announced today, a total of 225 food samples (including 217 vegetable and fruit samples) have been detected as having excessive pesticide residues. The overall unsatisfactory rate is less than 0.2 per cent.

The spokesman added that excessive pesticide residues in food may arise from the trade not observing Good Agricultural Practice, e.g. using excessive pesticides and/or not allowing sufficient time for pesticides to decompose before harvesting. The MRLs of pesticide residues in food set in the Regulation are not safety indicators. They are the maximum concentrations of pesticide residues to be permitted in a food commodity under Good Agricultural Practice when applying pesticides. In this connection, consumption of food with pesticide residues higher than the MRLs will not necessarily lead to any adverse health effects.

The CFS will follow up on the unsatisfactory result, including tracing the source of the food in question and taking samples for testing. Investigation is ongoing.

Trace of nitrofurans metabolite found in prepackaged frozen tiger prawn sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 29) announced that a trace amount of metabolite of furazolidone (a type of nitrofurans) (AOZ), a non-permitted veterinary drug, was found in a sample of frozen tiger prawn imported from India. Follow-up is in progress.

Details of the product are as follows:

Product name: TIGER PRAWN Peeled & Deveined, Tail On
Product brand: ocean gems
Place of origin: India
Importer: Indoguna Lordly Company Limited
Packing: 1 kilogram per pack
Best-before date: March 3, 2020

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS collected the tiger prawn sample at import level for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that it contained AOZ at a level of 21 parts per billion."

The CFS has informed the importer concerned of the irregularity and the importer had stopped selling the affected product. The CFS is tracing the source and distribution of the affected product.

"The JECFA (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives) considered that competent authorities should prevent residues of furazolidone in food," the spokesman said.

The CFS will alert the trade to the incident, continue to follow up and take appropriate action.

Excessive cadmium found in two

prepackaged dried mushroom samples

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 29) announced that two prepackaged dried mushroom samples were detected with cadmium, a metallic contaminant, exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the cases.

Details of the products are as follows:

- (1) Product name: Dried Mushroom
Product brand: Herbary Health
Place of origin: Japan
Packer: Herbary Health Food Co Ltd
Net weight: 500 grams per pack
Best before date: December 31, 2019
- (2) Product name: Mushrooms
Product brand: Not available in English
Place of origin: Taiwan
Sole agent of Hong Kong and Macau: Chopsticks Company Ltd
Net weight: 70 grams per pack
Best before date: October 20, 2018

"The CFS collected the two dried mushroom samples from a supermarket in Admiralty and an online shop respectively for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. After applying the conversion factors for dried foods as recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the results showed that the samples contained cadmium at levels of 0.18 parts per million (ppm) and 0.162 ppm respectively, exceeding the legal limit of 0.1ppm," a CFS spokesman said.

"The CFS has informed the vendors concerned of the irregularities and instructed them to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batches of the products. The CFS is tracing the source of the affected products."

According to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap 132V), any person who sells food with metallic contamination above the legal limits is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

"Based on the levels of cadmium detected in the samples, adverse health effects will not be caused under usual consumption," the spokesman said.

The CFS will alert the trade to the incidents, continue to follow up and take appropriate actions. Investigation is ongoing.

[Hong Kong Customs signs Authorized Economic Operator Mutual Recognition Arrangement with New Zealand and Action Plan with Canada \(with photos\)](#)

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang, signed a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) with the Acting Comptroller of the New Zealand Customs Service, Ms Christine Stevenson, in Brussels, Belgium, yesterday (June 28, Brussels time) during the 132nd Council Session of the World Customs Organization.

Under the MRA, the Hong Kong Authorized Economic Operator (HKAE0) Programme and the New Zealand Secure Exports Scheme are mutually recognised, by which Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) of both economies enjoy mutual customs clearance benefits, including reduced examination and prioritised clearance.

This is the ninth MRA that the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) has concluded with other Customs administrations after those with the Mainland, India, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan and Australia. Apart from demonstrating the two Customs administrations' efforts in strengthening international cargo security, the signing of the MRA with New Zealand also enables accredited Hong Kong traders to better explore the market there by leveraging their edge of certified status under the Belt and Road Initiative.

MRA negotiation is now extending to North America. During the same Council Session today (June 29, Brussels time), the Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Excise and Strategic Support), Mr Jimmy Tam, signed an MRA Action Plan with the Vice President of the Canada Border Services Agency, Mr Martin Bolduc, to mark the commencement of formal negotiation for mutual recognition of the HKAE0 Programme and the Partners in Protection programme in Canada.

Participation in the HKAE0 Programme is free, open and voluntary. Any company engaging in business principally related to the international supply chain is welcome to apply for AEO status. Since the formal launch of the HKAE0 Programme in April 2012, the C&ED has accredited 47 companies as AEOs, including multinational companies and small and medium-sized local enterprises.



Correctional officers intercept smuggling of suspected dangerous drugs into Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre

Correctional officers at Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre today (June 29) intercepted a remand person in custody smuggling suspected dangerous drugs into the centre by concealing them inside his body.

The 54-year-old remand person in custody was remanded in the institution for the offence of possession of dangerous drugs on June 27. After undergoing X-ray body scanning, he was suspected to have swallowed suspected dangerous

drugs before admission and was therefore separated and put under close monitoring.

At 10.02am today, he discharged six packs of suspected dangerous drugs wrapped in plastic sheet. The case has been reported to the Police for follow-up.

A spokesperson for the Correctional Services Department said, "The department takes every measure to stop the introduction of dangerous drugs or unauthorised articles into correctional institutions in order to maintain good order and discipline and a drug-free environment for all persons in its custody."